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AUTHOR Sallot, Lynne M.
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ABSTRACT

A study tested effects of motives, communication style, and licensing (whether the practitioner is licensed or not) on public relations practitioners' reputations. Impression management theory suggests that perceived motives and self-interests may explain the poor reputation sometimes attributed to public relations practitioners. Subjects, 585 undergraduate students and non-student adults, read one of four brief news articles announcing plans of a fictitious manufacturer of laser printers to launch a laser cartridge recycling program in the local community. The four different types of news stories were combined with four different background information sheets on the motives of the public relations person responsible for the story to yield 16 different versions of questionnaires which were randomly distributed to subjects as they presented themselves to participate. Results indicated that (1) perceived motives to impression manage had a strong effect, with prosocial motives seen as a "hustle"; (2) mixed support was found for licensing as a means of enhancing reputation; and (3) communication style had no effect. Findings suggest that the time has come for public relations theorists, educators, and practitioners to shift their focus away from apologizing for the advocacy dimension inherent in public relations toward a renewed emphasis on ways that advocacy can become more effective and reputable. (Contains 137 references, nine tables of data, and 27 notes. Appendixes present the four stories, the four background information sheets, and a debriefing sheet. (RS)

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# DOING GOOD IS A HUSTLE, TOO: EFFECTS OF MOTIVES TO IMPRESSION MANAGE, COMMUNICATION STYLE, AND LICENSING ON THE REPUTATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER

By

**Lynne M. Sallot, Ph.D., APR**
**Assistant Professor**
**Department of Advertising/Public Relations**
**Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication**
**University of Georgia**
**Athens, Georgia**

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**Abstract**

**DOING GOOD IS A HUSTLE, TOO:
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COMMUNICATION STYLE, AND LICENSING
ON THE REPUTATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER**

**By Lynne M. Sallot, Ph.D., APR, Assistant Professor,
Department of Advertising/Public Relations,
Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication,
University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia**

**Impression management theory suggests that perceived motives and self-interests may explain the poor reputation sometimes attributed to public relations practitioners. A 4x2x2 factorial design experiment was conducted with 585 non-student adults and undergraduates to test effects of motives, communication style and licensing on practitioners' reputations. Perceived motives to impression manage had a strong effect, with prosocial motives seen as a "hustle." Mixed support was found for licensing as a means of enhancing reputation. Communication style had no effect.**

What does the public think of public relations practitioners? Although public relations pervades almost every aspect of most Western cultures, references to the field's poor reputation abound (see, for example, DeLoache, 1976; Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988; Lapierre, 1990; Newsom & Scott, 1985; Pavlik, 1987). Yet there has been comparatively little formal research conducted about what the public thinks of public relations, or even about the attitudes toward the practice of those who use public relations as clients or sponsors.[1] The topic is thought to be worthy of additional research--management perceptions of public relations has been identified as one of six priority research questions for the 1990s in public relations (McElreath, 1990).

From time to time, public opinion polls measuring status or prestige of various occupational groups include public relations. For example, Olasky (1987) cited a poll about occupations in which public relations practitioners were ranked just ahead of used car sellers.[2] At the same time, the reputation of public relations is not always terrible; sometimes it is fairly good. In an extension of a 1964 benchmark study, Davis, Smith, Hodge, Nakao and Treas (1991) analyzed prestige ratings assigned by a national sample to 740 occupational titles. Participants were asked to rate prestige of the occupations. The resulting index of occupational prestige ranged from the low score for dishwashers to the high score for physicians. Public relations specialists were rated above average and ahead of advertising salespersons, fortune tellers and used car sellers, but behind print journalists, television and radio announcers, and funeral directors.

As an industry, public relations has experienced great growth, with increasing numbers of organizations using public relations, greater numbers of practitioners entering the field, and increased enrollments in public relations degree programs in the past twenty years (Becker, 1991; Kendall, 1984). At best, public relations is valued for the services it performs for many of the organizations it represents, and provides a rewarding career choice for many of its practitioners (Newsom, Scott, & Turk, 1989).

Under these divergent conditions, it seems reasonable to re-examine public relations' perceived poor image, and to seek alternative explanations for why it is that public relations--at least by some critics under some conditions--appears to be disliked, distrusted, and denigrated. Might there be something intrinsic about public relations itself that diminishes its reputation?

## An Advocacy View of Public Relations

Since nearly the beginning of public relations, advocacy has been at the heart of its practice. Its early practitioners were glorified as "special pleaders who seek to create public acceptance for a particular idea or commodity" (Bernays, 1928, p. 47). Yet, practitioners and educators who responded to a recent poll[3] were mixed as to whether practitioners should function as advocates, work to build consensus, do both, or play some other role (Katzman, 1993). There are few references to advocacy in the recent public relations research literature. Among the few, Bivins (1989a, 1989b, 1993) visualized professional roles in public relations on a continuum with "technician" anchoring one end and "mediator" the other and suggested that technicians practice advocacy while mediators or counselors do not. Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) note that "despite a few voices to the contrary, public relations practitioners generally and readily accept persuasion and advocacy as their major function" (p. 4). Other scholars appear uncomfortable with the advocacy aspect of public relations. L. Grunig (with J. Grunig, 1990) wrote that "many, if not most, practitioners consider themselves to be advocates for or defenders of their organizations and cite the advocacy system in law as an analogy," (p. 32), but she (L. Grunig, 1992) views advocacy as an "unsolved problem" in public relations.

The present research argues for a model of public relations that depicts advocacy as an underlying dimension linking all the various roles in public relations. In this model, all public relations practitioners are seen to advocate, perhaps in varying degrees according to circumstances, but to advocate nevertheless. The model assumes that advocacy is an inherent component of public relations and cannot be separated from the practice, and that public relations by its nature involves intended advocacy. Within the framework of this model, and applying

Pavlik's (1987) definition of public relations, a public relations practitioner is seen as an advocate in the business of managing relationships.

## Grunig's Four Models of Public Relations

In 1984, Grunig and Hunt conceptualized along several dimensions what they called four models of public relations. Grunig's models are useful in suggesting that there are different approaches to the practice of public relations with regard to purpose, historical development, communication style, research, organizational goals, and practical application. However, the concept of advocacy in public relations was ignored in the earliest research literature regarding Grunig's models. More recent discussions of advocacy and Grunig's models present inconsistent views (see, for example, L. Grunig, 1992). Grunig's models 1, 2 and 3 clearly allow for self-interest and advocacy, but model 4 does not. Puzzling, then, is the suggestion by J. Grunig (1992a) that professionals who practice "excellent" public relations combining two-way symmetric and asymmetric models may serve as advocates for their own sponsoring organizations and the sponsoring organizations' "strategic publics" or audiences (p. 19, emphasis added).

As originally conceptualized, the models proved to have some other limitations in application: for example, their defining characteristics tend to overlap and blur. Subsequent research (Grunig, 1989) seems to indicate that in reality organizations practice several models together, with the press-agentry the most popular overall; the public-information model the most popular with governmental agencies, but also the most difficult to isolate because it is seldom practiced alone; and the two-way asymmetrical the most popular in corporations. When practiced, the two-way symmetrical model is now thought likely to be applied in combination with the two-way asymmetrical. Also, scales developed to measure the four Grunig models have suffered from chronically low reliability, with alphas ranging, for example, from .53 to .62 across seven studies (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1990).

There is no question that Grunig's models have contributed immeasurably to the field by generating a substantial body of research. More is needed, particularly regarding the "slippery"

model 4. However, the models are particularly meaningful to the present study for identifying key issues to be investigated in an experiment. Most important is the issue of motive or purpose in public relations. The Grunigs (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1990) note that practitioners of the two-way symmetric model are not expected to be completely altruistic, and that "excellent" public relations involves a "mixed-motive" model, which they characterize as part symmetrical and part asymmetrical.

This study will examine how different kinds of motives--altruistic, prosocial or "mixed," selfish, or no motive assigned--in a public relations context impact the reputation of public relations practitioners among the general public. Such motives will be examined from the perspective of the impression management paradigm in social psychology.

## The Impression Management Perspective

Impression management is the process of regulating behavior in order to create a particular impression on others (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). It involves the deliberate regulating or controlling of information and the editing of the images that are presented so they are consistent with the goals of the impression manager (Schlenker, 1980). Impression managers may choose to emphasize one attribute to one audience and another aspect to a different audience, neither attribute necessarily feigned, but both a salient part of the whole (DePaulo, 1992). Such controlling of information facilitates goal achievement, and in this sense, impression management is thought to be purposeful, strategic and dynamic (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). The definition as a deliberate attempt to convey a particular impression does not imply that impression management is necessarily, intrinsically deceptive (Jones & Pittmann, 1982; Schlenker, 1980, 1984; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

The impression management paradigm accounts for such concepts as the association principle, which suggests that individuals or organizations intentionally claim and maximize associations with desirable images, and that they avoid and wish to minimize association with undesirable ones (Schlenker, 1980). Impression management also may be viewed as a power-

augmenting strategy, which may be pursued by means of ingratiation undertaken to achieve affection and augment likability (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Widely recognized as the "founding father" of impression management is Erving Goffman, whose Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959) has served as the primary dramaturgical inspiration for the paradigm (Schlenker, 1980). By the 1960s, E. E. Jones (see, for example, Jones, 1964) was undertaking a series of studies of ingratiation behavior from the impression management perspective; by 1980, the field had so progressed that Schlenker published Impression Management, and dozens of scholars were conducting research that continues today on many different aspects of the paradigm.

Pro-Social Behavior and Appearance of Intentionality

Hogan and Jones (1984) quote Malcolm X as having remarked, "Doing good is a hustle, too" (p. 28). Hogan and Jones were referring to the application of self-presentational analysis to "conventionally approved, even exalted" social identities or personalities such as Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa. Tedeschi and Riordan (1981) say that prosocial behavior "consists of actions that provide benefits to another person and do not appear (emphasis added) to be motivated by the benefactor's desire to obtain immediate reinforcements for himself" (p. 224).

"Attributed" intentionality or purposiveness is a key factor when considering communication messages. Participants in communication are thought to be capable of distinguishing between behaviors perceived as high or low in intentionality or purposiveness (Bowers, 1989; Bradac, Hopper & Wiemann, 1989). Messages that are generated intentionally are rhetorical messages, and an important part of message value may be the "attribution or nonattribution of intention by the interpreter" (Bowers, 1989, p. 14). The effects of intentionality or purposiveness seem worthy of further testing from the perspectives of impression management as well as public relations.

## Links between Impression Management and Public Relations

Although much of the impression management research has focused on interpersonal relations, the perspective applies equally well to organizational communication (see, for example, Arkin & Shepperd, 1989; Gardner & Martinko, 1988). The impression management perspective seems particularly well suited for enhancing understanding of public relations, since impression management and public relations both largely involve the strategic control of information to communicate particular, desired impressions to identified audiences. In this sense, public relations is impression management. However, very little research has yet linked public relations with impression management.[4]

Still, the prospect of examining public relations from an impression management perspective seems promising. Strategic impression management behaviors generated by the intentionality and purposiveness of self-interest, even in instances of pro-social behavior (Tedeschi & Riordan, 1981),[5] are thought in the present work to occur in the advocacy actions of public relations. Therefore, the impression management paradigm may suggest an alternative explanation for public relations' poor image other than as stemming from the conflict between journalists and practitioners, or as the result of unethical or unprofessional behaviors of a few peripheral practitioners.

To summarize, impression management research suggests that when an observer knows that an actor is intentionally engaging in impression-managing behaviors to achieve a particular goal, the observer is likely to view the actor as self-interested, manipulative and deceitful, and to distrust and dislike the actor, even when the actor's goals are beneficent to society. This is because those who do good to win favor are seen as manipulative and deceitful when self-interests are seen as driving such behavior (Bowers, 1989; Bradac, Hopper, & Wiemann, 1989; Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Relating this knowledge to the advocacy view of public relations, audience knowledge of selfish or mixed motives on the part of public relations advocates is expected to lead to greater

distrust than when public relations practitioners and their sponsors have altruistic or unknown motives.[6] This suggests that even when public relations advocates serve society's interests, they may be held suspect--they may even be seen as "hustling" as Malcolm X put it--because of their perceived point of view and self-interests of their sponsors.[7]

## Additional Influences on Reputation

It seems reasonable to ask if there are any conditions which may cause a public relations advocate to be more trusted or less trusted. In addition to different motives to manage impressions, this study proposes to examine two possible conditions that may moderate the negative perceptions of motives to impression manage because of advocacy roles: communication style and professionalism.

### Influence of Communications Style

In recent years, interactive, symmetrical models of public relations, based on different styles of practice or approaches to public relations, have been revered as a means of elevating the professional status of public relations. Some researchers claim that applications of these symmetric models instead of asymmetric models may counteract some of the negativity surrounding the field (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1989; L. Grunig, 1987; Repper, 1992), although the premise, until this study, has not been tested experimentally. These interactive, symmetrical models have constituted the predominant focus of research in public relations for the past decade (Pasadeos & Renfro, 1992). Several definitions of public relations and several scholars in the field consider two-way communication a condition of the practice. These scholars insist that, without two-way communication, public relations does not exist (Kendall, Baxter, & Pessolano, 1988; Ehling, 1984, 1985).

Others believe that one-way communication, rooted in the rhetorical model, can be equally effective and is not intrinsically inferior to two-way communication. They argue that such one-way communication can be characterized as persuasive communication, and is often used in public relations to good effect (Bernays, 1985; Heath, 1992c; Miller, 1989). Heath (1992b) and

Toth and Heath (1992) identify rhetoric as one-way communication. Classic rhetorical post-hoc evaluations of speaker's intent, oration, environment, and effect date back at least to the Greeks, and they are central to many different types of public relations efforts conducted today (Heath, 1980). Mid-century, Bernays (1985/1955) proposed in his book of the same title that, to function properly, public relations must apply persuasion to achieve "the engineering of consent" by the public. Miller (1989) asserts that one-way, persuasive communication is not ineffective; on the contrary, it is a highly effective method that humans use to attempt to exert control over their environments, and is "an inevitable aspect of <u>being alive</u>" (p. 46).

In the practice of public relations, scientific research methods often provide the feedback mechanism for two-way communication, in which practitioners both seek information from and give information to publics (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1990). The practice uses a variety of methods to gather information including communications audits, involving interviews and content analysis of written and published communications; focus groups; and issue tracking or environmental scanning for trends of concern to clients. But probably the most popular research method is public opinion polling or surveying (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Seitel, 1989).

Although there were skeptics in the early days of polling after the turn of the century[8] (Converse, 1987), and although those who have never participated in a poll are more skeptical (Koch, 1985, cited in Asher, 1988), today people are aware of polls[9], and generally find polls and pollsters credible (Kohut, 1983; Roper, 1985). Therefore, in its examination of the effects of different communications strategies on the public's evaluations of public relations, the present study will characterize one-way communication by the rhetorical model, while two-way communications will be portrayed by polling and in-depth interviewing.

<u>Influence of Professionalism</u>

Professionalism also has been linked with Grunig's models, with several studies reported by J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990, p. 20) having found relationships between professionalism and

the two-way models.[10] Others have found links between credibility and professionalism. For example, in a telephone survey of 100 practitioners about how credibility of public relations could be enhanced, increased professionalism was cited most often after better ethics, with professional accreditation mentioned more often than licensing as a means of accomplishing increased professionalism (Judd, 1989).

To enhance their reputations, many occupations have joined the trend toward government licensing to achieve the status of profession. State licensing has become the primary means of regulating occupations serving the public. There are estimates that as much as one-third of the work force is directly involved in licensed occupations (Hogan, 1983b). Rose (1983) notes that forces on the side of licensing across professions include expertise, tradition, and politics; forces opposed entail individual liberty and individualism, theories of free enterprise, and egalitarianism.

Bernays (1992, 1993) has been the most vocal proponent for licensing of practitioners in public relations as a way to enhance credibility in the practice and to elevate the practice to a profession. Others have publicly supported Bernays' position (see, for example, Forbes, 1986). Indeed, licensing or certification is considered one of the criteria that distinguishes mere occupations from professions.[11]

Hogan (1983a) argues that licensing may not improve quality of professional services because licensing boards often fail to discipline errant practitioners, and that actions taken against the licensed are as likely to be aimed at eliminating competition as they are targeting incompetence. Further detriments cited include increased costs of services, creation of shortages in supply, ineffective use of paraprofessionals, and impediments to needed reforms in education, training, and services. Instead of licensing, he advocates a registration system for professionals in all aspiring professions.

Others have vigorously opposed licensing in the practice, including the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)[12] (see, for example, Baxter, 1986; Lesly, 1986; "What Public Relations Leaders Are

Saying," 1993). The opposition reasons that government involvement would be ineffective, restrictive, unwelcome, and superfluous.

While this is the first study to examine effects of licensing experimentally, accreditation in public relations has been studied. For example, Wright (1981) surveyed 72 accredited members of PRSA and 76 non-accredited members and compared responses on measures of professionalism, such as values and involvement in professional organizations. While accredited practitioners were found to be more professional, the level of professional orientation was still low.[13] So far, accreditation is the only option in public relations. Although legislation to introduce licensing in public relations was introduced in Bernays' home state of Massachusetts last year, no state has yet adopted licensing of practitioners as a standard. However, Australia recently adopted a policy that firms and practitioners must be "quality accredited" to be eligible for government contracts ("Australia demands," 1993).

In the national survey regarding occupational prestige previously cited (Davis, Smith, Hodge, Nakao and Treas, 1991), although public relations practitioners were judged to be more prestigious than average, they were far below another professional group that gets equally bad press--lawyers. The fact that lawyers are licensed and win such higher prestige ratings may lend some support for Bernays' (1992, 1993) arguments in favor of licensing of public relations practitioners. The present study will examine how the public evaluates public relations when its practitioners are licensed and when they are not. For the purposes of investigation, in general, licensed professionals are expected to be seen as more reputable than unlicensed.

## Implications of Reputation in Public Relations

Of particular interest to the present study is research concerning how source and message effects interact to affect reputation. The persuasion research has postulated that three elements make up source valence: credibility, attractiveness and power. Credibility of a source can be analyzed according to the sources's apparent expertise and objectivity; that is, the source's perceived ability to know the correct stand on an issue, and the source's perceived motivation to



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communicate this information without bias (McGuire, 1969, 1981). Credibility has been seen to be an important issue in public relations because it is based on the realities of behavior as well as favorable perceptions; it is "difficult to win and easy to lose"; and increasing "global village" pressures are expanding boundaries of concern about reputations (Newsom, Scott, & Turk, 1989, p. 61).

Another aspect of source credibility is objectivity. The less objective a source appears and the more an audience suspects a source intends to persuade, the less opinion change will be produced (McGuire, 1969, 1981). A source who stands to profit from the audience's being persuaded is judged as being less fair and tends to produce less opinion change (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland & Mandel, 1952).

Much of the research regarding the reputation of public relations among journalists (see, for example, Aronoff, 1975) found that practitioners were judged to be low-credibility sources when they are seen as highly motivated communicators with something to gain from acceptance of their messages. In the present study, audience evaluations of the public relations practitioner are expected to depend on whether evaluators perceive practitioners' motives intentionally to serve their clients' self-interests and on practitioners' communication style and professionalism.

## Research Hypothesis

This study will attempt to answer the question: What does the public think of public relations practitioners? Four levels of motives to impression manage will be examined: altruistic, prosocial or mixed, selfish, and no motive given. For the purposes of investigation, in general altruism is hypothesized to be evaluated more favorably than unknown motives; selfish and mixed motives are expected to be evaluated less favorably than unknown motives. Turning to the next factor under investigation--communication style--two levels of communication style or strategy, will be examined with dialogue hypothesized to be seen as more reputable than monologue. Finally, two levels of professionalism will be examined--licensed practitioners versus not-licensed

practitioners, with licensed expected to be seen as more reputable--in conjunction with the four levels of motive and two levels of communication style discussed previously.

The following hypothesis predicts an interaction among the three factors under study for the primary dependent variable--audience evaluations of public relations practitioners. It is expected that:

**Evaluations of public relations practitioners will be higher when licensed practitioners engage in dialogue communication strategies for altruistic motives, than evaluations of public relations practitioners when unlicensed public relations sources have selfish motives and the practitioner engages in monologue communication strategies.**

The prediction is derived from the belief that public relations will be viewed as more reputable with all the halo effects previously discussed thought to accrue from licensing, altruism, and dialoguing, contrasted with the detrimental impact expected on reputation from having unlicensed practitioners using monologue styles for selfish motives. In addition, audience opinions about degree of advocacy and importance of licensing in public relations will be investigated.

## Methodology

An experiment was planned and conducted with 585 subjects[14] to test the effects of different impression management motives, communication styles or strategies, and professionalism on audience evaluations of practitioners. Audience perceptions of degree of advocacy and importance of licensing in the field were also investigated.

### The Experimental Manipulations

Four brief news articles, prepared with a desktop publishing system to resemble authentic newspaper articles (see Appendix A for copies of each of the four articles), announced plans of a fictitious manufacturer of laser printers to launch a laser cartridge recycling program in the local community. The recycling program was based in part on the Harvard Kennedy School of Government case study of Seattle's mandatory recycling program, which has become a prototype for similar programs around the nation (Husock, 1991), and from actual public relations materials

promoting recycling programs.[15] Four informational backgrounders were prepared on separate pages, consisting of one, three, or four paragraphs of typewritten copy (copies of each of the four backgrounders are included in Appendix B).

The design was a completely randomized 4 (no motive for impression management given versus selfish motive versus prosocial motive versus altruistic motive) x 2 (monologue versus dialogue communication style) x 2 (unlicensed versus licensed public relations information source) factorial. Subjects were assigned to one of four simulated newspaper articles (two communication strategy manipulations and two professionalism manipulations) and one of four different informational backgrounders (four impression management motive manipulations). The four different newspaper articles and four different backgrounders (4 x 4) thus yielded 16 different questionnaire versions used in the experiment. The 16 questionnaire versions were systematically ordered and were randomly assigned to subjects as they presented themselves to participate in the experiment. Because the manipulations involved fictitious narratives, after turning in their questionnaires, participants were given a debriefing statement which thanked them for participating and explained the fictions (see Appendix C) .

## Measurement of Variables

### Dependent Variables

Following O'Keefe's (1990) suggestion that the "predominant treatment of attitudes is a person's general evaluation of an object" (p. 18) and that such evaluative judgments constitute attitudes, in this study audience evaluation and audience attitudes are treated interchangeably. Semantic differential measures developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) and "strongly agree-strongly disagree" attitude measures developed by Likert (1932) were used.

To measure audience evaluations of public relations practioners,[16] 22 semantic differential items were included in the questionnaire after the experimental manipulations. The items were thought to describe traits that might be commonly used in evaluations of public relations.[17] The practitioner-evaluation dependent variable also included five Likert-type items meant to address audience perceptions of the practitioner's professionalism, likability, and

trustworthiness or audience "regard" for the practitioner. To measure pre-existing attitudes of subjects toward public relations in general, 11 of the trait items used in the evaluation of practitioner were presented before the experimental manipulations.[18]

Miscellaneous Measures

To investigate how audiences perceive public relations with regard to advocacy, three Likert-type items were included and are presented in the results discussion. Eight Likert-type manipulation check items are also discussed in the results section along with demographic items, such as sex, age, education level attained, and occupation. Subjects were also asked whether public relations practitioners should be licensed and corporations should hire licensed public relations practitioners. Altogether, the experimental questionnaire consisted of 155 items,[19] with only a few open-ended questions.

Pilot/Pre-test

The experimental treatments, manipulation checks, and primary dependent variable were pre-tested in a pilot study with an abbreviated form of the final questionnaire two weeks prior to the experiment.[20] Three practicing public relations professionals, each with more than twenty years' experience, reviewed the experimental manipulations to ensure resemblance to the "real-world" of public relations.

## Results

Subjects ranged in ages from 18 to 81 years ($M$ = 30.4, $SD$ = 17.1). Fifty-seven percent of the subjects were female and 43 percent were male. Nearly 67 percent completed some college, 8 percent claimed a bachelor's degree, 16 percent reported education beyond a bachelor's degree, and an additional 3 percent completed trade or vocation schooling.

## Constructing the Measures

### Evaluation-of-Practitioner Index

Principal factor analysis of the 22 items measuring attitudes toward traits of the practitioner using varimax and oblique rotations resulted in loadings on three factors. (Results are reported in Table 1.) A single item loaded on all three factors and several other items also

loaded on more than one factor. Examination of scree plots suggested a one-factor solution. The first factor explained 40.8 percent of the variance, the second factor explained 8.2 percent and the third, 2.3 percent, again suggesting a one-factor solution. Cronbach's alpha for an index consisting of all 22 items was .94 and would have decreased if any item was deleted. For these reasons, it was decided to combine all of the 22 trait items in a single trait index.

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Table 1 about here

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Principal factor analysis of the five items measuring audience regard for the practitioner using varimax and oblique rotations yielded a one-factor solution, explaining 49.9 percent of the variance. (Results are reported in Table 2.) Cronbach's alpha for an index of the five items measuring regard was .75.

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Table 2 about here

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The correlation between a summed index of the 22 practitioner-traits items and a summed index of its five practitioner-regard items was very strong ($r = .76$, $p < .001$). Preliminary data analyses suggested that results would be no different if the trait and regard items were treated as separate dependent variables. Cronbach's alpha for the entire index of combined items was .94. Thus, for the sake of brevity, it was decided to combine the 22 semantic differential and five Likert-type items into a summed 27-item index measuring "audience evaluation of the practitioner." The mean score for audience-evaluation-of-practitioner index was 5.0 (SD = 1.26).

Pre-Existing Attitudes Toward Public Relations

Eleven of the trait items that comprise the evaluation-of-practitioner index were presented before the experimental manipulations as a "pre-test" measure of attitudes toward pubblic relations in general. Cronbach's alpha for the index of pre-existing attitudes was .88. The mean score for the covariate index was 4.6 (SD = 1.3).



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Advocacy in Public Relations

To investigate how audiences perceive public relations with regard to advocacy, three Likert-type items were included: "Public relations practitioners are motivated by the self-interests of their clients or sponsors," "Public relations practitioners put their clients' interests first because they are advocates for their clients," and "Public relations practitioners are primarily concerned with the public's impressions of their clients or sponsors." Cronbach's alpha for an index of the three advocacy items combined was .72. The mean score for the perceived-advocacy-in-public-relations index was 5.1 (SD = 1.32).

## Assumptions

Analysis of variance was the primary statistical method used to test for significant effects of motives, communication style and professionalism on audience evaluations of public relations practitioners. Visual examination of tests for kurtosis and skewness revealed no threats to the assumption of normality. Tests for homogeneity-of-variance, including Cochran's C, Bartlett-Box F, and Hartley's F max, did not reveal violations to the assumptions of normality or homoscedasticity. This permitted the data analyses, regardless of the slightly unequal treatment cell sizes,[21] to proceed with confidence (Kennedy & Bush, 1985; Keppel, 1982).

Manipulation Checks

Eight Likert-type items were included in the questionnaire after the experimental manipulations. One-way analyses of variance for each of the items show significant differences in cell means in expected directions (Table 3).

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Table 3 about here

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## Tests of Hypothesis

Following the t-test procedure that Kirk (1982) recommends for a priori comparisons, the hypothesis was supported. Evaluations of licensed public relations sources were found to be higher when motives were altruistic and the practitioner engaged in dialogue communication (M =

5.5), than evaluations of unlicensed public relations sources when motives were selfish and the practitioner engaged in monologue communication ($M$ = 4.7, $t(569)$ = -4.2, $p < .0001$).

However, in an analysis of variance of evaluations of practitioners with the three factors, and with the audience's pre-existing attitudes about public relations as a covariate, there were no significant interactions. The only significant effect was a main effect for motive ($F(3, 557)$ = 12.5, $p < .0001$). (The F-table is reported in Table 4 and the means in Table 5). Evaluations of the altruistic practitioner ($M$ = 5.3, $F(3, 581)$ = 12.9, $p < .0001$) were significantly better than for any other motive condition ($M$s from 4.8 to 5.0) by Scheffe procedures at the .05 level. There were no significant main effects for communication style or professionalism on evaluations of the practitioner.

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Tables 4 and 5 about here

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To summarize the findings from testing the hypothesis: motives had a strong effect on evaluations of the public relations practitioner.[22] Post hoc analyses were conducted to investigate these relationships further and to examine secondary dependent variables.

## Other Significant Findings

### The Doing Good Question

Is doing good a hustle? Hypotheses testing with orthogonal a priori comparisons did not fully answer this question as it relates to evaluations of public relations in general. One-way analysis of variance, and the resulting significant followup comparisons of means reported in Table 7, sheds some additional light. Doing good all the way, characterized by the altruistic manipulation, was never seen as a hustle; selfish motives always were. In addition, altruistic motives are seen as more reputable than either or prosocial motives.

Perceptions of Advocacy

A significant interaction was found for communication style and professionalism on perceptions of advocacy in public relations ($F(1, 564) = 5.9$, $p < .02$). (The F-table is reported in Table 6 and means in Table 7.)

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Tables 6 and 7 about here

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Analysis of variance on perceptions of advocacy for simple effects of professionalism and communication style revealed that, in the monologue condition, unlicensed practitioners were seen as greater advocates for their sponsors ($M = 5.2$) than licensed practitioners ($M = 5.0$, $F(1, 564) = 4.1$, $p < .05$). However, in the licensed condition, practitioners who used dialogue were seen as greater advocates for their sponsors ($M = 5.2$), than those who used monologue ($M = 5.0$, $F(1, 654) = 5.5$, $p < .03$). Analysis of variance of perceptions of advocacy for simple effects of professionalism in the dialogue condition and communication style in the unlicensed condition were not significant.

Corporate Concern for Public Interest versus Self-Interests

Analysis of variance of a manipulation check item--"In launching the recycling program, Tru-Data Corporation is putting the public interest before its own self-interests"-- yielded a two-way interaction of communication style and professionalism ($F(1, 569) = 4.8$, $p < .03$). (Table 8 reports the F-table and Table 9 the cell means.)

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Tables 8 and 9 about here

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Followup analysis of variance for simple effects of communication style and professionalism revealed significant differences between communication styles in the licensed practitioner condition. The licensed practitioner using one-way communication was seen as more concerned with the public interest ($M = 3.9$) than the licensed practitioner engaged in two-way

communication (M = 3.4, F(1, 569) = 7.7, p <.005). There were no significant effects of communication style in the unlicensed condition.

Looking at simple effects of professionalism in the communication style factor, there were near-significant differences in the dialogue condition with the licensed practitioner appearing to be less concerned about the public interest (M = 3.4) than the unlicensed practitioner (M = 3.7, F(1, 569) = 3.5, p <.07). There were no significant effects of professionalism in the monologue condition.

Be Licensed, Hire Licensed?

Subjects believed fairly strongly that "Public relations practitioners should be licensed" and "Corporations should hire licensed public relations practitioners" with means of 4.9 for each of the two items (SD = 1.6 for both).

Differences Among Subjects

Analysis of variance of the primary dependent variable by the three treatment factors and whether the subject was a student or non-student adult yielded a significant difference in only one of the 16 cells.[23] There were no significant differences across the three treatment factors regarding subjects' sex, age, level of education attained, occupation for non-students, or major course of study for students.

## Summary of Findings

This study investigated how the public regards public relations practitioners and explored a theoretical explanation for why practitioners sometimes accrue a negative reputation. It also examined effects of different kinds of motives to impression manage, communications styles, and professionalism on public relations' reputation. Generally, it was hypothesized that public relations practitioners would be more reputable when licensed practitioners engage in two-way communication for altruistic motives, and less respected when unlicensed practitioners use one-way communication for selfish motives.

As expected, motives make a difference in how people see public relations professionals. Evaluations of practitioners are significantly better when the practitioner is licensed and uses two-

way communication for altruistic reasons compared with the unlicensed practitioner who uses one-way communication for selfish purposes. However, these differences cannot be attributed to any overriding effects of different communication styles or professional licensing. The results of this study suggest that the strongest, statistically significant effect on these evaluations is caused by differences in motive. These findings that differences in perceived motives have strong effects are explained by impression management theories which suggest that impression managers who are seen as acting with overt, intentional behaviors for self-gain are less liked and trusted than actors who do not appear to be intentionally managing impressions (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Riordan, 1981).

Motives: The Doing Good Question

Is doing good a hustle, too? In this study, in which prosocial or mixed motives are assumed to be "hustling" in order to make a favorable impression, the answer is yes. Followup comparisons of main effects for motive reveal that when practitioners are doing good all the way, characterized by the altruistic manipulation, they are never seen as hustling; in comparison, selfish motives always are held more suspect.[24] In addition, altruistic motives are seen as more reputable than either hidden or even prosocial motives. These findings lend support to the impression management theories previously discussed (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Riordan, 1981), that yes, doing good-- characterized in this study by prosocial behavior--is seen as a hustle.

Be Licensed, Hire Licensed

Participants believed that practitioner should be licensed and that corporations should hire licensed public relations professionals. Responses to open-ended items indicate audiences who favor the licensing of practitioners and the hiring of licensed practitioners believe that licensing enhanced trustworthiness, credibility and ethics. A minority opposes the licensing of practitioners and the hiring of licensed practitioners, objecting to what they perceive as already excessive governmental regulation and arguing that licensing offers no perceived benefits to counteract their objections.

Corporate Concern for Public Interest versus Self-Interests

Using one-way communication makes the corporation represented by a licensed practitioner appear more interested in the public interest, while two-way communications has the opposite effect: engaging in dialogue characterized by polling and in-depth interviewing makes the corporation represented by a licensed practitioner appear less concerned with the public interest. Perhaps using such two-way communication is seen as manipulative, while one-way communication rooted in the rhetorical tradition is seen as more persuasive and authoritative.

Perceptions of Advocacy

Public relations practitioners, regardless of motives, licensing or communication style used, are seen as strong advocates for their clients.[25] Licensed practitioners engaging in dialogue and unlicensed practitioners using monologue are perceived as playing the strongest advocacy roles in public relations; licensed practitioners using one-way communication are perceived as being less strong of an advocate for their sponsors.

## Limitations of the Study

It is reasonable to question whether the communication style manipulation used here, with two-way communication operationalized as public opinion polling and in-depth interviewing, is wholly representative of this factor in practice. With the polling manipulation, it might have been helpful to include items measuring how much subjects trusted polling, or whether they had ever participated in a poll themselves (Converse, 1987). A stronger manipulation depicting two-way communication as polling might have portrayed an independent third party as conducting the poll.[26]

## Conclusions and Implications

The primary question posed in this study was: What do people think about public relations practitioners? The simplest answer is, it depends. There is both good and bad news, with some expected and unexpected implications.

Overall, the good news--which, given public relations' bad press, is a pleasant surprise--is that among the general public, the reputation of public relations practitioners is better than what

many think. In this study, in most conditions, public relations practitioners are granted a reputation of better than average. The bad news is that some of the tenets that public relations theorists, practitioners and educators alike hold dear do not always hold up. Following are a few proposed revisions to the body of knowledge in public relations that seem worthy of further investigation.

Licensing

This study lends only limited and qualified support for the licensing of public relations practitioners, but recognizes a potential danger and presents a critical caveat. This study found that the public says it supports the licensing of practitioners and the hiring of licensed practitioners because the public believes that licensing enhances credibility, professionalism and prestige of the field, just as the supporters of licensing claim (Bernays, 1992, 1993; Forbes, 1986).

However, experimental tests strongly suggest that licensing does not make a difference in how the public views public relations when licensing is considered with other factors, such as motives and communication style. An interesting finding of this study is that there was no significant change in how audiences viewed public relations practitioners after exposure to the selfish practitioner who was licensed.

Therefore, regarding licensing of professionals, this study proposes that the potential danger is grave and the caveat presented here has a sting. The danger is that licensing appears to carry with it what may be an unearned aura of respectability, strong enough to even counteract and compensate for selfish motives. For example, the licensing of selfishly motivated practitioners may make them appear more ethical, authoritative, and reputable than they deserve. The caveat is: should licensing ever become the norm, it must carry with it strong sanctions that must be enforced against any transgressors. Without such enforced sanctions, it is possible the reputation of public relations would suffer many more times over.

Additional investigations regarding the effects of licensing on reputation of practitioners should be undertaken with different operationalizations than the ones presented here, along with

examinations of the effects of accreditation or professional registration as alternatives to licensing. These investigations might lend themselves to an experimental design.

Communication Style and Strategy

Contrary to much of the research on two-way symmetrical models (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1990; J. Grunig, 1992a), two-way communication[27] does not make a difference in how the public views public relations when various other factors--such as perceived motive and professional credentials such as licensing--are taken into account. Nor do one-way persuasive presentations fashioned after the rhetorical model impact the reputation of public relations.

However, different communication styles may very well impact other dependent variables, such as the secondary dependent variables investigated in this study. For example, two-way communications, operationalized as polling and interviewing, made corporate sponsors appear less concerned with the public interest, and perhaps seem more opportunistic and manipulative, while the rhetorical manipulation may have made the practitioner appear more authoritative and seem more concerned with the public interest.

Additional research with different operationalizations is needed to clarify these relationships. But the rhetorically-based theorists (Heath, 1980, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; Miller, 1989) are correct that one-way communication is as effective as two-way communication styles, and the notion that two-way communication is a prerequisite of public relations (Ehling, 1984, 1985) is not supported here.

Motives to Manage Impressions

Public relations often attempts to serve two masters: the interests of the client or sponsor that the practitioner is representing, and the public interest.

In general, this research suggests that it is more effective, in the sense of enhancing credibility and trustworthiness among publics, to let purely altruistic motives be known, and to keep any other motives hidden along with the concealment itself. More research is needed to replicate and extend the findings. It might be particularly useful to examine the effects of different motives to impression manage and motives to adapt behaviors under varied conditions. Again, an experimental design might be useful.

Advocacy in Public Relations

This research supports the argument that practitioners, as portrayed in the roles presented in these experimental manipulations, are seen as advocates. The findings also imply that, as the impression management literature suggests (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Tedeschi & Riordan, 1981), the self-interests and intentionality (Bowers, 1989; Bradac, Hopper, & Wiemann, 1989) inherent to public relations advocacy may account for diminished reputation under some conditions. This study lends support to the theory that sometimes there is something intrinsic about public relations that calls its reputation into question, and the "something" involves its underlying dimension of advocacy and motives to manage impressions on behalf of clients and sponsors.

This research also suggests that although public relations practitioners are seen as advocates, they are not automatically held suspect; other factors--such as perceived self-interests and mixed motives to impression manage--come into play. Perhaps the time has come for public relations theorists, educators, and practitioners to shift their focus away from apologizing for the advocacy dimension inherent in public relations toward a renewed emphasis on ways that advocacy in public relations can become more effective and reputable.

## NOTES

1. In the past, public relations scholars most often have attempted to explain the negative image of public relations in two primary ways: (1) as a by-product of the conflict between journalists and public relations practitioners in which public relations gets bashed in newsrooms and news columns (see, for example, Aronoff, 1975; Belz, Talbott, & Starck, 1989; Cline, 1982; Charron, 1989; Feldman, 1961a, 1961b; Gieber, 1960; Habermann, Kopenhaver, & Martinson, 1988; Jeffers, 1977; Kopenhaver, Martinson, & Ryan, 1984; Nicolai & Riley, 1972; Rivers & Schramm, 1969; Ryan & Martinson, 1984, 1988, 1991; Sallot, 1990; Saunders, 1989; Schabacker, 1963; Spicer, 1993; Turk, 1986); and (2) by the theory that the "few bad apples" in the minority fringe spoil the reputation of all practitioners, what some call "blaming the periphery" (see, for example, Olasky, 1987, p. 135). The negative imagery of public relations is thought to contribute to the field's confused professional identity (Files, 1986), public distrust of public relations (Newsom, Scott, & Turk, 1989), and demoralization of its own practitioners (Olasky, 1987; Sallot, 1990).

2. According to staff at Public Relations Journal, the article does not appear in the issue Olasky cited, supposedly in the November 1972 Public Relations Journal on page 66 (personal communication, June 22, 1993). The reference is probably to a Harris poll. A NEXIS search revealed that Gallup does not include public relations in its polls about occupations.

3. The poll was conducted unscientifically; readers were invited to mail in their opinions. Results are not generalizable.

4. A recent review (Ginzel, Kramer, & Sutton, 1992) of impression management strategies employed by business leaders cites several classic case histories used in public relations textbooks, such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the NASA Challenger explosion, and Pan Am's Lockerbee tragedy, but there is not a single reference to the term "public relations." Avenarius (1993) notes that organizations and individuals control how they appear to others, and adds "You may call this impression management" (p. 66), citing Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1989).

Earlier this year, Purview, a newsletter supplement of PR Reporter, published a column headlined "'Impression management' tactics legitimize controversial actions" ("Impression Management," 1993), which reviewed an article by Elsbach and Sutton (1992) published in Academy of Management Journal as evidence of "the growing recognition of public relations and communications by schools of management" (p. 2). The newsletter accurately reported that the research article investigated techniques used by two radical social movement organizations--Earth First! and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)--in efforts to gain media coverage and public support for their unpopular, illegitimate actions. The illicit actions were characterized by Earth First!'s tree-spiking, which resulted in a lumber worker being injured when his blade hit a spike, and blocking roads and tree-sitting during Redwood Summer protests in northern California; and ACT UP's disrupting a service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and desecrating communion wafers, and shutting down the Golden Gate bridge. The newsletter also accurately reported the researchers' proposition most relevant to public relations: that is, when illegitimate actions are endorsed by credible personnel who are experts in their fields, the actions then become acceptable.

However, the newsletter did not report what the researchers (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992) termed their "rather unsavory" conclusion: that those seeking to persuade peers to like them and to legitimize them might accomplish their goals by using a strategy of first violating norms and offending the peers (p. 733). Even more relevant to this work, the newsletter did not explain how tactics the groups used were related to impression management, although the newsletter used the term in the headline.

The published research article (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992) quotes Schlenker (1980) and Tedeschi and Reiss (1981), and suggests that Earth First! and ACT UP used two specific impression management tactics--defenses of innocence and justifications in their strategic actions (p. 704). Although the researchers noted that both groups are organized enough to have national newsletters of their own and make money by selling t-shirts, bumper stickers, and buttons, the researchers got their information about the groups by interviewing member "informants." There are no references in the original published research to professional public relations practitioner representatives for either group. While the organizations profiled in the case used some traditional public relations techniques (e.g. attracting media coverage), it is difficult to classify it as a public relations case study since no professionals were involved.

In another rare citation of impression management in the public relations literature, while comparing the "production of images" with the "choice and use of symbols to communicate impressions of an organization," J. Grunig (1993) presents a narrow and superficial interpretation of the impression management paradigm as being concerned only with images, a term he uses pejoratively and equates with being deceitful (p. 129).

5. Tedeschi and Riordan (1981) define prosocial behavior as actions that provide benefits to others but that do not appear to be motivated by the benefactors' desire to obtain immediate payoffs for themselves (p. 224). This study uses the term to mean "mixed motives," in which actions provide benefits to others as well as to the benefactors, but differs from Tedeschi and Riordan's usage in that the benefactors may appear to "do good" for others as well as themselves. In other words, while self-interests may be present, they are not the sole motive, as in purely selfish behavior, but neither are such self-interests intentionally hidden.

6. Although some authors (e.g. Beck, 1990) use altruism and prosocial behavior interchangeably, in this study altruism refers to behaviors intended to benefit others without any known return benefit, prosocial refers to behaviors intended to benefit others as well as self-interests; selfish refers to behaviors intended to primarily serve self-interests; and unknown refers to behaviors for which motives are unassigned.

7. For the purposes of this discussion, self-interest in public relations will be assumed to include the interests of the client or sponsor whom the practitioner is representing.

8. Who would believe that a sample of 1,500 could accurately reflect the opinions of the whole country?

9. In a national sample, 84 percent had heard of them.

10. In these studies, mostly unpublished master's theses, indices of professionalism include, for example, membership and participation in professional societies, and readership of professional journals.

11. Other criteria include intellectualism, a code of ethics, a comprehensive self-governing organization, greater emphasis on public service than self-interests such as profits, performance of a "unique and essential service based on a substantial body of knowledge," broad autonomy, and "having practitioners guided by altruism" (Wright, 1981, p. 51).

12. Both PRSA and IABC oversee and make money from professional accreditation programs for their members.

13. Since the study cited was conducted, PRSA has elevated requirements for accreditation, such as making periodic re-accreditation mandatory. To be eligible for re-accreditation, professionals must now engage in regular continuing education.

14. Experimental methodology is comparatively rare in public relations research. However, much of the impression management research has used experimental methodology to focus on goals and behaviors of impression managers. Departing from that precedent, Schlenker and Leary (1982) investigated audience reactions to actors' self-presentations by portraying fictitious actors in written scenarios in which the actors' actions are manipulated to measure various impression management effects. The Schlenker-Leary design was adopted as the methodological model for the present work.

The present experiment was conducted during three weeks in April 1993 with 585 subjects. Nearly half of the subjects (N = 291) were non-student adults, the majority of whom were engaged through interceptions at a regional shopping mall in the southeast. The non-student subjects were offered a monetary incentive of $1, which they could keep or donate to a local non-profit organization. Thirty-eight of a total of 260 questionnaires returned during the shopping mall intercepts were incomplete and excluded from analysis. Among the 291 non-student adult subjects were 69 who belonged to either of two non-profit organizations, or who were acquaintances of volunteer data collectors, and were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions. The rest of the subjects (N = 294) were undergraduate students awarded extra credit in an introductory speech communication course at a large university in the southeast. Subjects who identified their occupation or major course of study as public relations, print or broadcast journalism, or advertising were excluded from the analysis. Subjects were randomly assigned to the various manipulated conditions.

15. These materials were contributed by Paula Musto, Director of Communications for Metro-Dade County, Florida.

16. In addition to audience evaluations of public relations practitioners, the original study also examined two other dependent variables: audience attitudes toward public relations sponsors, depicted in the experiment by Tru-Data Corporation, the fabricated company sponsoring the proposed laser cartridge recycling program; and audience attitudes towards public relations in general. Results were basically identical for all three of these dependent variables, with only one exception noted in the results discussion. In the interest of parsimony, only the results related to evaluations of public relations practitioners will be presented here.

17. Items were culled from informal, open-ended responses to the question "What do you think of when you think of the words public relations?" posed by the researcher to a variety of audiences in numerous fora during the past three years and in the pilot/pre-test study for the present work. Additional items were adapted from the literature on source credibility (see, for example, Aronson & Golden, 1962; Frandsen & Clement, 1984; Hovland & Weiss, 1952; Judd, 1989; McCroskey & Young, 1981; McGuire, 1969; Miller & Hewgill, 1964; Slater & Rouner, 1991).

18. These pre-existing attitude measures were thought to be a potentially productive covariate and was incorporated into the design as a means of increasing statistical power (Kennedy & Bush, 1985).

19. Previously developed scales designed to measure individual differences among subjects regarding cynicism (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989), self-monitoring (Briggs & Cheek, 1988; Snyder & Gangstead, 1986), and impression management behaviors in socially desirable responding (Paulhus, 1991) were included in the questionnaire for future analyses. The experimental conditions accounted for two pages, and the questionnaire numbered 11 pages plus a cover sheet informing subjects that the study was about how mass media affect public evaluations about an environmental issue and they would read a newspaper article and complete a questionnaire. Participants were also instructed to complete the questionnaire independently and were observed to ensure they did. Subjects took from 12 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire, but a few non-student adults needed a half-hour or more to finish.

20. In addition to completing the experiment, the 68 subjects who participated in the pilot were also asked to respond to the words "public relations." These open-ended responses were used to construct the semantic-differential trait items in the dependent variable and covariate measures. On the basis of results from the pilot test, minor adjustments in wording were made to some items and a few manipulation check items were revised.

21. The 16 treatment cell sizes were very near equal, with ten cells of 36 subjects each, four cells of 37 each, one cell with 38 and another with 39.

22. In the original study, in the analyses of variance, with pre-existing attitudes toward public relations as a covariate, of audience evaluations of the public relations practitioner and the corporate sponsor, overall F-tests found main effects only for motive. The licensed practitioner who engaged in dialogue for altruistic motives was viewed as more reputable than the unlicensed practitioner who used one-way communications and had selfish motives. The identical relationships held for evaluations of corporate sponsors. These significant contrasts are explained by the significant main effects for motive alone. However, for evaluations of public relations in general, there was a significant interaction of motive and professionalism.

23. Analyses of variance identified only one significant difference for audience evaluation of the practitioner in one particular treatment cell ($\underline{t}(33) = 2.6$, $\underline{p} < .02$). Students rated the licensed altruistic practitioner who used a monologue communication style as more reputable ($\underline{M} = 5.6$) than did non-students ($\underline{M} = 5.1$). In the original study, no significant differences were found for audience evaluations of corporate sponsors or public relations in general.

24. It should be noted, however, that the lowest score in the selfish condition for motive was 4.5, still above the mid-point on the 1-to-7 scale, with 7 being the most positive evaluation.

25. The mean for the advocacy items was 5.1 ($\underline{SD} = 1.3$) on a scale of 1-to-7, with 7 being strongest.

26. Other limitations include that the selfish motive manipulation in this experiment suffered a confound by suggesting that the corporate sponsor promised public officials "generous contributions to the re-election funds" if the company's pilot project proved successful. The licensing manipulation also suffered a confound with uniqueness and goodness by suggesting that "only 5 percent" of practitioners were licensed. A better manipulation might have required licensed practitioners to have passed uniform examinations of professional standards and ethics; however, such a manipulation may have had a weaker effect than suggesting that licensed practitioners were special. The unlicensed condition was characterized only by absence of information about whether the practitioner was licensed, but the tests to check the manipulation yielded desired results.

Although the experimental manipulations varied in length, the results of the pilot test indicated there were no systematic differences in the findings that could be explained by the different lengths, so the experiment proceeded with the manipulations as planned. Likewise, results from the actual experiment did not reveal any systematic differences in the findings that could be explained by differences in length of the manipulations. However, it is possible that had the questionnaire been briefer, effects might have been stronger; it is possible that subjects became fatigued and hurried to finish.

Considerable effort and expense was extended to secure participation by the non-student adult subjects to maximize external validity and extend generalizability beyond undergraduate student populations. However, a potential external validity problem with the manipulations is that they only portrayed one practitioner and one corporate sponsor, perhaps making it difficult for subjects to generalize to the field of public relations, its practitioners and sponsors overall.

One potential threat to internal validity involved the non-student adults who participated in the experiment. In addition to non-students who participated in mall intercept data collections,

69 non-student subjects who belonged to either of two non-profit organizations, or who were acquaintances of volunteer data collectors, were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions to make 14 of the 16 cells more even in number. There were no differences among subjects across treatment conditions for such demographic variables such as sex, age, education attained, and occupation, providing support for the argument that subjects were indeed randomly assigned to the treatment conditions.

One strength of this study is that half of the subjects were non-student adults from the "real world," and that the undergraduate student subjects proved so similar to the "real-world" non-students. Wide diversity of gender, age, and race among subjects was observed. Also, subjects in the pilot test judged the fabricated newspaper articles used in the manipulations to appear authentic.

Another strength of this study is that the experiment was conducted in a shopping mall and a lecture hall, settings thought to be less artificial--but more distracting--than a laboratory. While subjects may have found the mall and hall settings distracting, it could be argued that the findings of this study might have been even stronger had the subjects been in testing environments with fewer or no distractions.

A weakness of the study is that subjects were invited to volunteer to participate, and though rewarded with a small amount of money or extra credit, the subjects may have had "helping" personalities. Another weakness in the design is a possible "testing x treatment" effect (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) in the evaluation-of-public-relations-in-general dependent variable. The 11 trait items which comprise the variable were presented before the manipulations as a test of pre-existing attitudes and again after the manipulations. This might have been partially offset by repeated instructions of "Don't turn back" to subjects throughout the questionnaire.

27. At least, two-way communication characterized by surveys of publics and in-depth interviewing.

Table 1

Factor Analysis of Audience Evaluations of Practitioner Traits

| Factors: | Mean | SD | Factor Loadings 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practitioner Traits: | | | | | |
| Honest-Dishonest | 4.6 | 1.3 | .82 | | |
| Insincere-Sincere* | 4.6 | 1.3 | .77 | | |
| Untrustworthy-Trustworthy* | 4.7 | 1.2 | .75 | | |
| Just-Unjust | 4.7 | 1.3 | .73 | | |
| Unconcerned-Concerned* | 5.2 | 1.4 | .72 | .31 | |
| Good-Bad | 5.2 | 1.1 | .71 | .30 | |
| Unkind-Kind* | 4.7 | 1.1 | .71 | | |
| Ethical-Unethical | 4.7 | 1.4 | .70 | | |
| Conscientious-Unconscientious | 5.1 | 1.3 | .62 | | |
| Believable-Not Believable | 5.0 | 1.4 | .60 | | |
| Unlikable-Likable* | 4.8 | 1.3 | .54 | .40 | |
| Attractive-Unattractive | 4.3 | 1.0 | .41 | | |
| Passive-Active* | 5.8 | 1.2 | | .73 | |
| Incompetent-Competent* | 5.4 | 1.2 | | .73 | |
| Unambitious-Ambitious* | 5.8 | 1.2 | | .66 | |
| Strong-Weak | 5.2 | 1.0 | .30 | .59 | |
| Intelligent-Not intelligent | 5.5 | 1.3 | | .59 | |
| Confident-Lacks confidence | 5.6 | 1.2 | | .57 | |
| Unprofessional-Professional* | 5.4 | 1.2 | .54 | .55 | |
| Unsociable-Sociable* | 5.2 | 1.2 | .39 | .50 | |
| Undependable-Dependable* | 5.2 | 1.2 | .39 | .45 | |
| Polite-Impolite | 4.7 | 1.1 | .39 | .31 | .40 |
| Eigenvalues | | | 9.0 | 1.8 | .5 |
| Percent Variance Explained | | | 40.8 | 8.2 | 2.3 |

Item: Subjects were instructed to "Please circle the number closest to how you rate Sandy Hanson on the following attributes."

* Denotes reverse-scored item. All items scored 1-to-7, with 7 most positive.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Audience Regard for Practitioner

| Items: | Mean | SD | Factor Loadings 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regard for practitioner: | | | |
| I respect Sandy Hanson. | 4.7 | 1.3 | .31 |
| Sandy Hanson is an ethical advocate for Tru-Data Corporation. | 4.7 | 1.4 | .31 |
| I do not trust Sandy Hanson.* | 4.5 | 1.4 | |
| Sandy Hanson deserves a raise. | 4.5 | 1.3 | |
| Sandy Hanson is a competent public relations representative. | 5.5 | 1.1 | |
| Eigenvalue | | | 2.5 |
| Percent Variance Explained | | | 49.9 |

Item: Subjects were instructed to "Circle the number closest to your opinion on the following statements."

* Denotes reverse-scored item. All items scored 1-to-7, with 7 most positive.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Results of Means of Manipulation Checks for Motives

| Item and F Result | S | P | A | NMG | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S = selfish, P = prosocial, A = altruistic, NMG = no motive given | | | | | | |
| With regard to the new recycling program, Tru-Data Corporation seems to be (scale of 1 = extremely altruistic-to-7 = extremely selfish).* | 3.9[a] | 4.0[b] | 4.7[ab] | 4.5[ab] | 12.2 | .0001 |
| Tru-Data Corp's primary goal in launching the recycling program is to increase its own profits.*+ | 2.9[a] | 3.3[b] | 3.9[ab] | 3.8[a] | 11.9 | .0001 |
| In launching the recycling program, Tru-Data Corp is putting the public interest before its own self-interests.+ | 3.2[a] | 3.6[b] | 4.1[ab] | 3.8[a] | 9.0 | .0001 |
| Sandy Hanson is unethical and puts her personal concerns before all others.*+ | 4.5[a] | 4.6[b] | 5.2[ab] | 4.9 | 7.4 | .0001 |
| Sandy Hanson seems to be: (scale of 1= highly unprofessional -to-7=highly professional). | 5.0[a] | 5.1[b] | 5.5[ab] | 5.2 | 4.1 | .007 |
| Tru-Data Corporation seems to be most interested in: (scale of 7=Its own interests -to-1 = the public's interests).* | 3.1[a] | 3.7[b] | 4.2[ab] | 4.1 | 17.4 | .0001 |

* Denotes reverse-scored item.

\+ Denotes items scored 7=Strongly agree, 1=Strongly disagree.

Note: Degrees of freedom for each F-test were 3, 581. Entries sharing superscripts are significantly different at the .05 level by Scheffe procedures.



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Table 4

Analysis of Covariance of Evaluations of Practitioner by Motive, Communication Style and Professionalism

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Covariate** | | | | | |
| Pre-PR Attitude | 37.9 | 1 | 37.9 | 68.6 | .0001 |
| **Main Effects** | | | | | |
| Motive | 20.7 | 3 | 6.9 | 12.5 | .0001 |
| Communication Style | .01 | 1 | .01 | .01 | .98 |
| Professionalism | .9 | 1 | .9 | 1.6 | .20 |
| **2-Way Interactions** | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style | 1.0 | 3 | .3 | .6 | .60 |
| Motive by Prof | 1.4 | 3 | .5 | .9 | .46 |
| Comm Style by Prof | .1 | 1 | .1 | .1 | .73 |
| **3-Way Interactions** | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style by Prof | 1.3 | 3 | .4 | .8 | .50 |
| Explained | 63.2 | 16 | 4.0 | 7.2 | .0001 |
| Residual | 307.6 | 557 | .6 | | |
| Total | 370.8 | 573 | .6 | | |

| Covariate | Raw Regression Coefficient |
|---|---|
| Pre-PR Attitude | .29 |

Table 5

Means of Evaluations of Practitioner by Motive, Communication Style, and Professionalism

ALL THREE FACTORS:

Communication Style: Monologue

| Motive: | Selfish | Prosocial | Altruistic | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unlicensed Practitioner | 4.7 N = 36 | 4.7 N = 36 | 5.3 N = 36 | 5.0 N = 36 |
| Licensed Practitioner | 5.0 N = 37 | 4.8 N = 37 | 5.4 N = 36 | 5.1 N = 38 |

Communication Style: Dialogue

| Motive: | Selfish | Prosocial | Altruistic | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unlicensed Practitioner | 4.8 N = 39 | 4.9 N = 36 | 5.2 N = 37 | 5.1 N = 37 |
| Licensed Practitioner | 4.7 N = 36 | 5.0 N = 36 | 5.5 N = 36 | 4.9 N = 36 |

MAIN EFFECT FOR MOTIVE:

| Motive: | Selfish | Prosocial | Altruistic | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practitioner | 4.8[a] N = 148 | 4.9[a] N = 145 | 5.3[a] N = 145 | 5.0[a] N = 147 |

Note: Row entries sharing superscripts are significantly different at the .05 level by Scheffe procedures.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance of Perceptions of Advocacy in Public Relations by Motive, Communication Style and Professionalism

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Motive | 4.3 | 3 | 1.4 | 1.3 | .28 |
| Communication Style | .5 | 1 | .5 | .5 | .49 |
| Professionalism | .1 | 1 | .1 | .1 | .72 |
| 2-Way Interactions | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style | 1.4 | 3 | .5 | .4 | .74 |
| Motive by Professionalism | 1.8 | 3 | .6 | .5 | .66 |
| Comm Style by Prof | 6.5 | 1 | 6.5 | 5.9 | .02 |
| 3-Way Interactions | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style by Prof | .6 | 3 | .2 | .2 | .92 |
| Explained | 15.3 | 15 | 1.0 | .9 | .55 |
| Residual | 628.7 | 564 | 1.1 | | |
| Total | 644.0 | 579 | 1.1 | | |

Table 7

Means of Perceptions of Advocacy in Public Relations by Professionalism and Communication Style

| Communication Style: | Monologue | Dialogue |
|---|---|---|
| Unlicensed Practitioner | 5.2[a] N = 143 | 5.0 N = 148 |
| Licensed Practitioner | 5.0[ab] N = 147 | 5.2[b] N = 142 |

Note: Row entries sharing superscripts indicate simple effects at the .05 level.

Table 8

Analysis of Variance of Evaluations of Corporate Concern for Public Interest versus Self-Interests by Motive, Communication Style and Professionalism

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Motive | 61.6 | 3 | 20.5 | 9.1 | .0001 |
| Communication Style | 6.7 | 1 | 6.7 | 3.0 | .09 |
| Professionalism | .4 | 1 | .4 | .2 | .67 |
| 2-Way Interactions | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style | 8.7 | 3 | 2.9 | 1.3 | .28 |
| Motive by Professionalism | 5.6 | 3 | 1.9 | .8 | .48 |
| Comm Style by Prof | 10.9 | 1 | 10.9 | 4.8 | .03 |
| 3-Way Interactions | | | | | |
| Motive by Comm Style by Prof | 6.3 | 3 | 2.1 | .9 | .43 |
| Explained | 100.4 | 15 | 6.7 | 3.0 | .0001 |
| Residual | 1289.0 | 569 | 2.3 | | |
| Total | 1389.3 | 584 | 2.4 | | |

Table 9

Means of Evaluations of Corporate Concern for Public Interest versus Self-Interests

| | Unlicensed | Licensed |
|---|---|---|
| Monologue | 3.7<br>N = 145 | $3.9^{a}$<br>N = 148 |
| Dialogue | $3.7^{b}$<br>N = 149 | $3.4^{ab}$<br>N = 143 |

Note: Row entries sharing superscript "a" indicate simple effects at the .05 level; those sharing "b" superscript approach significance.

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## APPENDIX A
## EXAMPLES OF SIMULATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Each of the four articles featured identical two-line headlines stating "Tru-Data Corp leads county recycling of laser cartridges," and was written similarly with regard to structure, the placement of information and quotations, use of sources, and positioning of manipulated information. For example, each article explained that the announcement occurred at a press conference hosted by Tru-Data Corporation, sponsor of the laser cartridge recycling program, and quoted the corporation's public relations director as a primary news information source. Each article also bore a sub-head directly beneath the headline. The sub-heads contained a manipulation of communication strategy discussed in detail later.

The Manipulation of Communication Style

Communication style was manipulated in the fictional newspaper articles and sub-heads.

Dialogue Style Manipulation "Dialogue" was operationalized as the corporation having conducted scientific public opinion polls to gauge public support for the laser cartridge recycling program. In the dialogue newspaper article, the sub-head stated that "Opinion polls conducted by company show 'overwhelming' community support" for the recycling project. Two paragraphs in the middle of the article described the poll's finding that 95 percent of residents supported recycling and that followup in-depth interviews with residents indicated "very strong" support. Such public opinion surveying and interviewing research activities are widely considered to be sound practice in planning and implementing public relations campaigns (see, for example, Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Seitel, 1989).

Monologue Style Manipulation The "monologue" newspaper article carried a sub-head reading "Company reports its position on new pilot program." There were no mentions of polling, followup interviews, or any other kind of corporate-sponsored research investigating public opinion about the proposed recycling. Such one-sided approaches by a company, without any reference to the will of the public, is widely believed in theory and practice to be less effective than "dialoguing" with the public by means of audience or market research (see, for example, Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Seitel, 1989).

The Manipulation of Professionalism

The third and final manipulation involved effects of audience perceptions of professionalism of public relations practitioners operationalized as practitioners being licensed or no reference made to licensing. Professionalism was manipulated in the simulated newspaper articles.

Licensed Manipulation In the "licensed" condition, the last paragraph in the newspaper article contained three sentences explaining that the public relations practitioner was one of only 5 percent of practitioners licensed in the state in the past year; that the state was among the first to license practitioners who qualified by "adhering to high professional standards"; and that the program is "similar to the licensing of doctors and lawyers in most states."

Unlicensed Manipulation In the "unlicensed" manipulation, these sentences were simply eliminated and there were no other references to the licensing of public relations practitioners.

The four articles follow.

Dialogue Communication Style - Licensed Practitioner

# Tru-Data Corp leads county recycling of laser cartridges

## Opinion polls conducted by company show 'overwhelming' community support for pilot project

Alachua County residents, including University of Florida students, will help save the environment – and drinking water for local wildlife – in a new laser cartridge recycling venture with Tru-Data Corporation this summer.

By June 1, more than 100 Alachua County businesses, local government offices and the University of Florida will be sending the 5,000-some laser printer cartridges used each month to Tru-Data Corporation for recycling on a volunteer basis.

Tru-Data Corporation's laser cartridge recycling project with Alachua County is serving as a pilot project for Florida.

According to Sandy Hanson, public relations director for Tru-Data Corporation, a small computer laser printer manufacturing company based in Orlando, laser cartridges pose increasingly serious threats to the environment as laser printers become more popular.

As more people use laser printers with their computers at work, school and home, greater volumes of discarded cartridges are ending up in area landfills, Hanson said during a press conference yesterday.

"The increased volume of used cartridges is filling up local landfills too fast. And because of the high concentration of white-collar industry in the area, Alachua County is the largest consumer of laser cartridges in north Florida.

"Also, residual carbon particles from the cartridges may leach into the underground water tables beneath the landfills," she said.

Hanson added, "While there is no immediate threat to the water table, if we don't vigilantly begin recycling these laser cartridges soon, our local wildlife eventually will suffer from these toxins and die. The recycling project will prevent this."

The program is being launched by Tru-Data Corporation after the company conducted extensive research to seek out residents' views and found that the community is "overwhelmingly in favor" of the recycling plan to help the environment, Hanson said.

A scientific poll of 1,500 area residents conducted by Tru-Data last month revealed that 95 percent of the participants said they would support the recycling program to safeguard the environment. In-depth interviews with 100 additional residents also resulted in "very strong" support for the recycling, Hanson added.

"Tru-Data saw this project as an opportunity to take a leadership role in an important environmental issue. Tru-Data Corporation is a good corporate citizen, and we have selected environmental protection and conservation as our corporate charity. We wouldn't get involved in a project of the kind we propose here in Alachua County unless we were absolutely certain that this is what the community wants. And our research shows that residents want the recycling effort," Hanson said.

Founded in 1987, Tru-Data Corporation manufactures laser printers under subcontract to Hewlett-Packard Corporation. Tru-Data employs 418 and last year reported before-tax profits of $1.2 million on sales of $19 million.

Fifteen officials from Tru-Data and the county attended the press conference at the Reitz Union to announce the recycling program.

The press conference was organized by Sandy Hanson as part of Hanson's responsibilities as the on-staff public relations director for Tru-Data Corporation. Hanson is one of only 5 percent of all public relations practitioners in Florida who have been licensed in the past year by the state. Florida is one of the first states in the nation to license public relations practitioners who qualify by adhering to high professional standards. The program is similar to the licensing of doctors and lawyers in most states.



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Monologue Communication Style - Licensed Practitioner

# Tru-Data Corp leads county recycling of laser cartridges

## ■Company reports its position on new pilot program

Alachua County residents, including University of Florida students, will help save the environment – and drinking water for local wildlife – in a new laser cartridge recycling venture with Tru-Data Corporation this summer.

By June 1, more than 100 Alachua County businesses, local government offices and the University of Florida will be sending the 5,000-some laser printer cartridges used each month to Tru-Data Corporation for recycling on a volunteer basis.

Tru-Data Corporation's laser cartridge recycling project with Alachua County is serving as a pilot project for Florida.

According to Sandy Hanson, public relations director for Tru-Data Corporation, a small computer laser printer manufacturing company based in Orlando, laser cartridges pose increasingly serious threats to the environment as laser printers become more popular.

As more people use laser printers for their computers at work, school and home, greater volumes of discarded cartridges are ending up in area landfills, Hanson said during a press conference yesterday.

"The increased volume of used cartridges is filling up local landfills too fast. And because of the high concentration of white-collar industry in the area, Alachua County is the largest consumer of laser cartridges in north Florida.

"Also, residual carbon particles from the cartridges may leach into the underground water tables beneath the landfills," she said.

Hanson added, "While there is no immediate threat to the water table, if we don't vigilantly begin recycling these laser cartridges soon, our local wildlife eventually will suffer from these toxins and die. The recycling project will prevent this.

"Tru-Data saw this project as an opportunity to take a leadership role in an important environmental issue. Tru-Data Corporation is a good corporate citizen, and we have selected environmental protection and conservation as our corporate charity. So we're just going to forge ahead," Hanson said.

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Monologue Communication Style - Unlicensed Practitioner

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# Tru-Data Corp leads county recycling of laser cartridges

## ■Opinion polls conducted by company show 'overwhelming' community support for pilot project

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The program is being launched by Tru-Data Corporation after the company conducted extensive research to seek out residents' views and found that the community is "overwhelmingly in favor" of the recycling plan to help the environment, Hanson said.

A scientific poll of 1,500 area residents conducted by Tru-Data last month revealed that 95 percent of the participants said they would support the recycling program to safeguard the environment. In-depth interviews with 100 additional residents also resulted in "very strong" support for the recycling, Hanson added.

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## APPENDIX B
## EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION BACKGROUNDERS

Four informational backgrounders were prepared on separate pages, consisting of one, three, or four paragraphs of typewritten copy. The first paragraph, which was identical in all four versions of the backgrounders, explained that the public relations practitioner quoted as a primary source in the preceding news article had carefully planned the press conference to announce the corporation's laser cartridge recycling program. All versions of the backgrounders revealed that the press conference was one of a series of activities planned and implemented by the public relations practitioner to ensure success of the program. Three of the backgrounders also presented information regarding various motives of the corporation and public relations practitioner for carrying out the recycling program and promotional activities. Manipulations of the four conditions occurred as follows:

No Motive Given Manipulation In the "no motive given" or "control" condition, readers were told only that the corporation's public relations director had been working on promotional plans, including the press conference, for six months to ensure success of the new laser cartridge recycling program.

Selfish Motive Manipulation In the backgrounder with the "selfish motive" manipulation, readers learned that the corporation had previously announced plans to open a recycled laser cartridge manufacturing subsidiary and that the recycling program would guarantee a free, steady supply of raw material, greatly enhancing corporate profits and value of company stock. In addition, the selfish-motive backgrounder detailed financial rewards granted by the corporation to local governmental and other institutions in exchange for support for the recycling program, as well as eligibility of the company to compete for a prestigious environmental award, and potential professional benefits for the public relations practitioner resulting from a successful recycling program launch.

Prosocial Motive Manipulation The backgrounder describing the "prosocial" or "mixed" motive told readers that the corporation launched the recycling program based on the assumption that "good corporate citizenship" yields favorable publicity and culminates in enhanced reputation and increased profits while also serving social interests. Information also was included about the eligibility of the company for a prestigious environmental award and potential professional benefits to the public relations practitioner for a successful program.

Altruistic Motive Manipulation In the backgrounder designed to achieve an "altruistic" manipulation, readers were told that several corporate executives personally supported environmental conservation, and that the company's sole objective in the recycling program was to "make a positive contribution to society."

Copies of each of the four backgrounders follow.

**(CONTROL CONDITION / NO MOTIVE GIVEN):**

**Now please read the following background information about**

**HOW SANDY HANSON STRATEGICALLY ORGANIZED**

**THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR TRU-DATA CORPORATION**

**As the on-staff public relations director paid to represent Tru-Data Corporation, Sandy Hanson has been working for six months with Tru-Data's corporate marketing director on promotional plans to launch the laser cartridge recycling program with Alachua County. The press conference was just one in a series of special events in a strategic PR campaign Hanson has planned and is implementing to ensure the success of the program.**

**(SELFISH MOTIVE):**

**Now please read the following background information about**

**HOW SANDY HANSON STRATEGICALLY ORGANIZED THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR TRU-DATA CORPORATION**

**As the on-staff public relations director paid to represent Tru-Data Corporation, Sandy Hanson has been working for six months with Tru-Data's corporate marketing director on promotional plans to launch the laser cartridge recycling program with Alachua County. The press conference was just one in a series of special events in a strategic PR campaign Hanson has planned and is implementing to ensure the success of the program.**

**Two weeks ago, Hanson announced that Tru-Data Corporation is planning to open a subsidiary company expressly for the purpose of manufacturing and marketing recycled laser printer cartridges within six months. The announcement was widely reported in local media. By implementing this recycling program with Alachua County, Tru-Data will be assured of a steady supply of old laser cartridges--absolutely free. Tru-Data's new subsidiary will refill the used cartridges it gets free from local government offices, businesses and UF and re-sell them at an extra 22 percent profit. If the Alachua County program is successful, Tru-Data will try to get other free sources of used cartridges by organizing recycling programs with other counties around the state.**

**Tru-Data promised Alachua County officials generous financial contributions to re-election funds if the pilot recycling program proves successful. Tru-Data also promised financial rebates to UF and participating businesses as a way to win support for the recycling program. Upon opening the new subsidiary company, Tru-Data plans to offer a common stock issue on the American Stock Exchange. Several Tru-Data executives who will be given stock options for the new company stand to make a substantial amount of money if the recycling program and new subsidiary are successful.**

**In investigating environmental programs before planning Tru-Data's joint venture with Alachua County, Sandy Hanson discovered that if the recycling program is successful, Tru-Data will be eligible for a prestigious "Save Our Land" award from the Florida Environmental Protection League. The award is given each year to the corporation that has done the most to protect Florida's environment. Hanson realizes this would be an ideal public recognition of Tru-Data's good works. Hanson could publicize Tru-Data's winning of the award as evidence of the company's good corporate citizenship in the state. A successful recycling program--and "Save Our Land" award--also would look good on Sandy Hanson's resume at promotion/salary review time.**

**(PROSOCIAL OR MIXED MOTIVE):**

**Now please read the following background information about**

**HOW SANDY HANSON STRATEGICALLY ORGANIZED**

**THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR TRU-DATA CORPORATION**

**As the on-staff public relations director paid to represent Tru-Data Corporation, Sandy Hanson has been working for six months with Tru-Data's corporate marketing director on promotional plans to launch the laser cartridge recycling program with Alachua County. The press conference was just one in a series of special events in a strategic PR campaign Hanson has planned and is implementing to ensure the success of the program.**

**Although it is a new company, Tru-Data Corporation has been looking for a social cause to affiliate itself with and support. Such corporate support and involvement in "good works" is generally considered a sound public relations strategy for two reasons. First, companies who participate in good causes are acting as good corporate citizens in their "giving back" of resources and expertise to benefit society. Secondly, companies who participate in good causes often benefit from favorable publicity in the news media for their participation in these programs. The publicity is thought to help contribute to public good will and elevate the public's opinion of the company.**

**Several Tru-Data executives personally support environmental conservation, and so they made the decision that environmental issues would become the focus of the company's "good works." Tru-Data's public relations department, under Sandy Hanson's direction, devised the cartridge recycling campaign with the company's marketing department as the company's first in a series of major "good works" projects and special events of this nature. Tru-Data's objectives are to make a positive contribution to society while improving the public's impressions of the company.**

**In investigating environmental programs before planning Tru-Data's joint venture with Alachua County, Sandy Hanson discovered that if the recycling program is successful, Tru-Data will be eligible for a prestigious "Save Our Land" award from the Florida Environmental Protection League. The award is given each year to the corporation that has done the most to protect Florida's environment. Hanson realizes this would be an ideal public recognition of Tru-Data's good works. Hanson could publicize Tru-Data's winning of the award as evidence of the company's good corporate citizenship in the state. A successful recycling program--and "Save Our Land" award--also would look good on Sandy Hanson's resume.**

**(ALTRUISTIC MOTIVE):**

**Now please read the following background information about**

**HOW SANDY HANSON STRATEGICALLY ORGANIZED**

**THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR TRU-DATA CORPORATION**

**As the on-staff public relations director paid to represent Tru-Data Corporation, Sandy Hanson has been working for six months with Tru-Data's corporate marketing director on promotional plans to launch the laser cartridge recycling program with Alachua County. The press conference was just one in a series of special events in a strategic PR campaign Hanson has planned and is implementing to ensure the success of the program.**

**Although it is a new company, Tru-Data Corporation has been looking for a social cause to affiliate itself with and support because it is genuinely concerned about and is committed to the communities it serves.**

**Several Tru-Data executives--including Sandy Hanson-- personally support environmental conservation, and so they made the decision that environmental issues would become the focus of the company's "good works." Tru-Data's public relations department, under Sandy Hanson's direction, devised the cartridge recycling campaign with the company's marketing department as the company's first in a series of major "good works" projects and special events of this nature. Tru-Data's sole objective is to make a positive contribution to society.**

## APPENDIX C

**Because the manipulations were fictitious, when subjects turned in their questionnaires, they were handed a debriefing statement, which read:**

**Thank you again for participating in the study. The article you read, the people and company and situations described in it are wholly fictitious. Alachua County residents, government offices, local businesses and students are not going to be participating in laser cartridge recycling, nor are laser cartridges threatening the environment or wildlife.**

**It is quite common for companies to support social causes as a way to act as good corporate citizens through public relations. Obviously, since the Tru-Data Corporation and Sandy Hanson do not exist, that is not the case in this fictitious instance. If you have any questions, please see your investigator.**

**There are no licensing procedures for public relations practitioners in Florida or elsewhere in the U.S., although such legislation has been proposed in Massachusetts.**